[Tashkent]

361 dust in constant suspension in the air. When the air is particularly
133 pure one can see from Tashkent the Turkestan mountain range, two hundred kilometers away, the continuation of the Alai mountains, with snow-covered crests, glistening like silver in the sunlight, are a magnificent sight.

[132] Tashkent has a very advantageous position in respect to climate as well. The town is protected in winter from the icy northeast winds by the high mountains in the northeast, so that Tashkent has a much warmer temperature during the coldest part of the year than locations farther west in the open steppe. Furthermore, since the valley of the Chirchik opens to the southwest, the amount of precipitation is relatively great, and Tashkent always has, for this reason, even during the worst droughts, a more than adequate water supply, an advantage of which hardly any other town in Turkestan can boast.

2. A Description of Sart Tashkent

361 ### 1. The Grounds and Fortifications of the Town

The Tashkent of today falls into two sharply separated and fundamentally different parts: the native town, so-called Sart Tashkent, and the Russian town, founded only after the Russian occupation. The later lies between the Bos-su canal and the Salar; Sart Tashkent extends primarily west of the Bos-su canal and has today, on the whole, the same dimensions and the same appearance as it did before the Russian conquest.

All Central Asian towns and even the larger villages divide into three separate parts: the bazaar, the most important part of the town, /154/ the residential quarters, which surround the bazaar, and finally the gardens and fields which surround the town proper from all sides. In Figure 49 this division of Turkestan towns is shown schematically. All the towns more or less approximate the basic type shown in the drawing, and deviate from it only insofar as the respective terrain and water conditions require. In the center of the town is the free bazaar square, in which are held the weekly bazaars or fairs as well as all sorts of public gatherings, executions, and the like. Along the bazaar square the permanent shops are joined together, mostly concentrically, while these again are surrounded by the residential quarters, consisting o simple clay huts. /Figure 49 p. 9a/ The sections we have mentioned so far, which together form the real town, are surrounded by an unbroken

2t Caroe S-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL1

meadows in springtime. The fields are well watered, the water-courses well planted with mulberry, poplar and willow against a drop-scene of violet-coloured hills rising to spires of ever-[137] lasting snow. From the mountain-skirts descend many clear streams, and springs well out shadowed by immemorial *chenars*.[1] Often, sheltering in a well-planted grove and watered by a rivulet, there stands a mosque antiquely carved in commemoration of the shrine of some local saint. Schuyler describes with delight the beauties of a refuge of this kind, reached after a thirsty march across a desolate valley strewn with gravel. He writes with understanding of the sense of refreshment to be gained from repose on ground so hallowed, whose beauty is the greater set against what Curzon describes as the wide and doleful plain, the sorrowful waste of a desert once at the bottom of a larger Caspian Sea. But there are none to tell us now whether the people can still find rest from the stridencies of Soviet life in garden cloisters such as this, holy places long before the advent of Islam. According to the Soviet press, the beauties of nature are banned as a subject for discourse or poetry.

● 132 There are other aspects of physical geography not without interest to the life of modern Turkistan. One of these is the influence on the movements of man of changes of climate that in this region took place either just before or after the opening of history. The clearest illustration is to be found in the discoveries of Aurel Stein in the archaeological field in Sinkiang. The remains of the cities he found buried in the Taklamakan sands prove that the water supply of the Tarim basin, when those cities flourished, was far more plentiful than it is today. There has in fact been a process of desiccation which, developing after the time when civilized man dwelt in cities, has led to mass migration out of Central Asia to more favourable

[1] The *platanus orientalis*, the eastern plane, possibly the finest of all deciduous trees. At its best in Kashmir, it flourishes from northern India in the east right across the Iranian and Anatolian plateaux as far as the Balkans in the west.

2: Caroe S-4 (no date) 1953 RL1 Soviet Central Asia RL1

climes. Because of the distance from the sea, precipitation even on the mountains around the Tarim basin is low, and there is ground for the belief that the glaciers are still shrinking, with a resultant steady diminution of the fertilizing water. In other words, the recession of the ice-age is to this extent and in this area linked with history.[1] A process which is working in Sinkiang has its application also to the very similar conditions of soil and climate obtaining in Russian Central Asia.

Another change, in this case historical, is that in the courses of the two great rivers Amu Darya and Sir Darya, and possibly even of other waters which empty into the Turanian basin. The records state that more than once in historical times the Oxus[2] (Amu Darya) at least has changed its course as between the Caspian and the Aral Sea. This is an aspect of physical geography at which all who write of Transoxiana glance again and again, with never-failing fascination. The idea runs like a thread through the literature of the region. The general thesis has the support of the Russian historian Barthold, who explains the decline of Khorezm by the shifting of the rivers' course in the XVIth century. He and others write as if they saw the Oxus with the eyes of Matthew Arnold — the great river moving mysteriously across the plain, seeming now to be lost and broken up in little channels 'a foiled circuitous wanderer', yet in the end flowing inevitably forward to release in the Aral Sea — a symbol of the history of the land.

According to Togan,[3] at the time of the Arab conquest the main waters of the Amu Darya (Oxus) flowed not to the Aral but to the now dry Özboy bed, after filling up the Sarikamish depression in the north of the Karakum desert and just below the Ust Yurt escarpment. At that time only one arm reached the Aral Sea, which was a great reed-swamp much smaller than

[1] Bib. I, 87, Sir C. Skrine.

[2] The name Oxus can be variously derived from Ak-su, the White Water, a tributary; or from Oghush (Arabic Vakhsh), the main tributary from the Terskey Alai and Karategin. In its upper course the Oghush is called the Surkhab or Kizilsu — Persian and Turkish for Red River — by the Tajiks and Turks respectively who live on its banks.

[3] *Op. cit.* pp. 108 *et seqq.*

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III

PATTERN OF PEOPLES

Few cases, perhaps, in romance or history, can sustain a close collation with this as to the complexity of its separate interests.

DE QUINCEY, Revolt of the Tartars

WE see a land wide and open like the ocean, closed in by the barriers of high mountain on one side and the unharvested desert or inhospitable inland waters on the other. Before the railways were built, in one quarter only, the north-east, was there comparatively easy passage from outside. And in restricted regions only, along the foothills of these mountains, and within their glens, or farther along the rivers which issue from them, is there a certain livelihood to be won through a settled agriculture. Elsewhere the steppe and the hillside offer a life only to the nomad, equipped to move his flocks and herds in pursuit of a precarious rainfall and an uncertain season. We shall expect then to find two forms of subsistence, the intensive cultivation of the oasis by the farmer bound to traditional uses, and the wandering life of the stockbreeder on the Alpine pasture or the steppe.

Many of the flatlands of what is now Russian Central Asia are farther from the sea than any part of the world land-mass save Sinkiang alone. Hence the uncertain precipitation in all but the mountain regions, and the need for the herdsman to wander far afield in search of pasture for his flocks. There are recurrent years of famine without winter snow or spring rain, years which are really reminders of the peril of desiccation hanging over these countries. It is this that has driven the pastoralist in history to become a nomad, wandering over the steppe almost as urgently as the tribes of Arabia in their

492 133 to Kashgar. Only Bactrian camels, very heavy double-humped animals, whose thick coat of hair protects them against the snow-storms and the bitter cold, are strong enough to carry burdens of merchandise through this waterless and treeless country. The temperature varies between + 35° centigrade in the summer and — 25° in the winter.

[132]

172 133 487 It is probable that conditions were not always so unfavourable. The ruins of richly adorned Buddhist temples and monasteries excavated by Sir Aurel Stein, Albert von Grünwedel, and Albert Le Coq, and an astonishingly large number of frescoes, sculptures, fabrics, and documents discovered by these scholars bear witness to this fact. The so-called silk-roads which passed these monasteries were

1 [In Eastern Turkestan --Analyst]

6

132 Western Turkestan, too, is a land of contrasts no less marked than those of Eastern Turkestan. Its climate is continental in the extreme and very dry. During the summer the temperature reaches more than 40° centigrade, and in the winter it falls to 25° below zero and even lower. Nine tenths of Western
133 Turkestan consist of barren desert. The desert of Kara Kum (Black Sand) to the South of the Aral Sea, the home of the wandering Turkoman tribes (see map on page 1434), was named the Grave of the Caravans, and Kizil Kum (Red Sand), the desert situated North of Kara Kum, gives but meagre sustenance to the nomad Kirghiz tribes and their herds.

All the more fertile by contrast are the oases of Western Turkestan. The district is watered by no fewer than six large rivers, among which are the two historically important streams of Amu Darya and Sir Darya, known to the ancients as Oxus and Jaxartes. The valley of the upper Sir Darya is named Ferghana, a fertile area surrounded by mountains, which in the course of history has been coveted and conquered by many peoples, chiefly for the sake of its famous horses. In more recent times it has become known as one of the principal cotton and silk producing countries (see ill. page 1438).

More than once within human recollection the Amu Darya has changed its course; three hundred years ago it sent at least one arm into

[1] [See cat 116, p 4 -- Analyst]

[2] [See cat 116, pp 13, 16 -- Analyst]

133 The Almatinka is no wider than 7 feet (3 arshins), with a depth of about 9 feet (4 arshins) and it can be forded anywhere. Furthermore the amount of water in the river is decreasing every year.

[312] This decrease of the water of the Almatinka is caused, first of all, by the fact that aryks or canals are led off from it, just after its emergence from the mountains, for the irrigation of the fields, gardens and kitchen gardens. Secondly, it is affected by the cutting down of the trees in the upper reaches of the river. The Almatinka flows into another mountain river, the Keskelen, which in turn flows into the Ili river. The Almatinka owes its name to the fact that its source in the mountains is thickly overgrown with apple trees ('alma') and apricot trees (uryuk).

361 Vernyy is located at a height 2500 feet
132 above sea level, and enjoys a warm and healthy climate. The summer heat rises to 30° centigrade in the shade. The inhabitants have remarked that the climate of the town is growing dryer every year. Formerly the winter cold was more bearable and the snow lasted only a few days. In more recent years the winters have begun to be Russian, about three months long. There is no doubt that here too the cutting down of the forests in the environs of the town has had a somewhat deleterious effect.

The summer heat spells are almost unbearable, but in the evenings and at night it is always cool because of the proximity

[Vernyy]

361
132 of the Alatau peaks, which are always covered with snow.

[164] The sudden change of temperature during the day causes intermittent fevers, which also constitutes the main sickness in Vernyy. Diarrhea is added to this in the summer, resulting from eating too much ripe and moderately unripe fruit.

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364 /419/ The lack of endorsement of measures to keep the air and water pure also has a bad effect on the health of the residents from time to time. Every kind of filth and impurity is left uncovered, either in the courtyards or in the streets, or they throw it into the water, so that both the air and the water are poisoned. The Kalmyks play a particularly active part in this. They are known for their unusual slovenliness, and are settled both in the town and on the outskirts along the Almatinka river.

361
132 The prevailing winds are the northwest, from Lake Balkhash, and the east wind, which blows in the spring. The former carries with it the sand, picked up from the dry and sandy Bet Pak Dala steppe and brings rain clouds.

Apples ripen at the beginning of August in Vernyy and apricots in the second half of June, while rye and wheat ripen in July.

The mean temperature of Vernyy, as determined by Golubev in 1861 is 7° centigrade. The city of Marseilles, which is situated on almost the same latitude as Vernyy, has a median annual temperature of 14.1° centigrade so that plums, peaches and tomatoes will grow there, but not at Vernyy. Yet vineyards grow here with some success.

8:Kostenko 147-G-4,5 (1868-80)1880 RL1 Turkestar
RL1

Kuldja

361 The town Kuldja discussed here is also
133 called "Old Kuldja" or "Taranchi Kuldja", as distinguished from "New Kuldja" or "Chinese Kuldja" which was destroyed in 1866, and was 35 versts southwest of the old town. Old Kuldja is situated in the broad valley of the river Ili, on its right bank, 3 versts from the river. Near Kuldja the Ili flows between wide banks, a broad and well-watered river. The right bank is steeper than the left both here and along the entire course of the river. Its width is about 136 feet. It is crossed by three ferryboats, maintained by a Russian businessman. It flows so swiftly, especially when there is a wind, so that the crossing is slow. The river freezes over 60 days a year, from the end of December to the end of February. Wood has long been floated down the Ili from the upper reaches to the middle course of the river.

[134]
• 132 The soil in the environs of the town is sandy loam and very fertile. The climate of
361 Kuldja is warm, healthy and pleasant. Although the summer heat here goes up to 41° centigrade in the shade, the heat is modified considerably by the summer rains. Because of the spring rains, grain takes root in the environs of Kuldja even without watering. The winters here are uniform, and the snow remains on the ground up to a month and a half. The cold in winter reaches 32° centigrade.

The Kuldja valley is protected by high mountains from all sides except the west, and apparently this fact goes far to explain the moderateness of the climate, which notwithstanding, permits the growing of delicate trees and

361 fruit, thanks to the southern position of the
132 country. Thus peach trees, apricots, pomegra-
[131] nates, vineyards, apples, pears and mulberry trees grow in the gardens of Kuldja.(1)

1. Footnote lacking.

All these fruits are small, however, and wild, for want of care. In Suidun (Suiting) which is forty versts west of Kuldja, the fruit is incomparably better, because when the Russians came there, the natives began to graft the Suidun fruit trees with the Kuldja ones. Even cotton plants grow in the environs of Kuldja, but their produce is limited because of the lack of enterprise. In Kuldja apricots ripen in the second half of June and peaches at the end of July and the beginning of August.

The prevailing wind is western, that is, from the lower reaches of the Ili. This wind brings humidity and rain with it.

361 Kuldja has a remarkably diversified
563 population. Here, as in all of the Ili valley in general, the most different nationalities are mixed together. Until the beginning of the 1860s, the government /429/ belonged to the Chinese, who dominated the more numerous Dungan and Taranchi peoples.

Conscious of their superiority over the natives, and distinguished by a markedly proud and arrogant character, the Chinese government and officials did not restrain themselves in ways of expressing their sovereignty. The people were overburdened with various taxes. In addition, the inhabitants of the Ili province

water volume, its speed, and the variability of its course. The other river, the Syr Darya, rises in the Tien Shan system. It is formed by the Naryn, which flows through wide valleys south and southwest of lake Issyk-Kul', and the lesser Kara Darya, which rises in the Fergana range. As opposed to the Amu Darya, it has a smaller volume, width, and depth, but it is longer and very suitable for irrigation. It flows through the Fergana Valley and then turns northwest through the desert zone toward the Aral Sea, which it enters also through a delta. Its most important affluent is the Chirchik which waters the oasis of Tashkent.

Among the mountain lakes the most notable is Issyk-Kul' which has an area of 2,395 square miles and lies 5,193 feet above sea level. It is slightly saline and does not freeze in the winter. Lesser lakes are the Kara-Kul' and the Zor-Kul', in the Pamir plateau.

Due to its remoteness from the oceans, the climate of Central Asia is very continental in nature. The continental characteristics already noted in Kazakhstan are still more accentuated in this region. The internal seas, the Caspian and the Aral, which border on Central Asia are too small to exert any tempering influence. Average summer temperatures in the lowland rise as high as 90° F, and in a great part of the region frosts of a few degrees below 0° F are possible in the winter. Evergreen vegetation, such as that along the Batumi coast of the Black Sea, does not exist in Central Asia. There is very little precipitation, generally 4 to 5 inches a year over a great part of the territory; only in the foothills does the rainfall amount to 16 inches or more. These climatic extremes are especially notable in such high mountain areas as the Pamir. In the valleys, such as the Fergana and the Zeravshan valleys, the climate is milder. Winter conditions are unsettled. Snow generally falls in December and remains on the ground till February, although it may melt earlier. The transition from the cold of February to the warmth of May is very sudden. Toward the end of that summer month wheat ripens and apricots are ready for picking. This period is followed by a long, hot, dry summer, in which predominantly dry winds blow from the north and wither the vegetation. These winds create sandstorms in the desert and sometimes raise a fine dust which blots out the sun. In the foothills and the mountains the summer is more temperate: there is precipitation, and the vegetation does not dry out. Toward the end of August or the beginning of September the heat lets up and is followed by a warm autumn, the best season in Central Asia. The climate of the Pamir and of the higher ranges of the Tien Shan reminds one of the Far North. Frosts

23: Shabad N-4 (no date) 1951 Rl Soviet Union Rl
Soviet Central Asia Rl 2

occur even in the early part of July; in the winter they fall to —49° F. During the summer the temperature rises to 60° F, and there is a great temperature difference between areas exposed to the sun and those in the shadow. The average yearly temperature in these mountain fastnesses approximates that on the shores of the White Sea.

The dry and extremely continental climate exerts a strong influence on the vegetation of Central Asia. Plants which adapt themselves to these conditions and are able to withstand drought periods are predominant in the desert and in the mountains. Steppe vegetation covers not only the plain but also the mountain slopes, reaching even to the area of permanent snows. In the high mountain valleys of the Tien Shan and the Pamir are salt steppes and salt lakes. Only a portion of the mountains is wooded, generally the northern and western slopes. Wooded belts (*tugay*) also occur along some rivers.

The desert vegetation consists of rather poor varieties. The plants are sometimes covered with thorns or fibers and are very sturdy. In the sandy desert the *saksaul* tree is the predominant type; of the other plants, umbrella-shaped plants, among which the Asafetida Giantfennel, exuding an ill-smelling resinous substance, and desert rhubarb, with large meaty leaves, are the most common. The long roots of the desert plants immobilize the sand, so that moving sand dunes are found only where no vegetation normally exists or where it has been destroyed by irrational grazing of livestock. Among the sands, occasional clay flats are covered sparsely by various types of wormwood and camelthorn, and saltwort is found in salt depressions. During spring and summer, the desert and steppe supports various bulbous plants, including wild onions. Along the rivers and the salt lakes there are thickets of *chiy*, a feathergrass often reaching a height of 12 feet, which is used by the local inhabitants for making mats and thatching roofs. The densely wooded clusters along streams include tamarisk, willow, poplar, and wild olive.

The mountain forests include deciduous trees on the lower slopes, with wild-growing walnut, pistachio, and apricot trees. Common European types, such as pine, oak, and linden, are completely lacking. In the eastern Tien Shan a type of fir is found. Above the forest zone there are rich mountain pastures, similar to Alpine meadows in the humid areas and to the Caspian steppe in the drier sections.

Central Asia has considerable reserves of mineral resources, but their exploitation has only recently been begun to any large extent. Along the mountain foothills there is a zone of petroleum deposits extending